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design which he probably once entertained, of writing an epic in honor of king Arthur, he has contented himself with narrating four stories from the numerous legends that cluster around the court of "the blameless king." The brave Geraint and the gentle Enid, the wise Merlin and the wily Vivien, Sir Lancelot the chief of knights, the fair Elaine, and the stately Queen Guinevere herself, are the chief characters whom Mr. Tennyson has essayed to reproduce for modern readers in a garb suited to modern taste. Nor do we fail to catch brief and pleasing glimpses of the central figure around which all these lesser personages revolved. Mr. Tennyson's plan left him but little room for invention; but the exquisite play of his fancy and imagination, and the generally harmonious flow of his verse, throw an irresistible charm over the whole volume. There are passages in it which, for beauty and pathos, will not suffer by comparison with any portion of Mr. Tennyson's previous writings. The narrative is picturesque, the characters are admirably painted, and the whole tone of the book is in harmony with the subject. The few prosaic passages only enhance the beauty of the rest by the force of contrast; and the poet appears to have wholly freed himself from the affectations which disfigured his earliest productions, without falling into the dreary platitudes of some of his court-lyrics. The volume will take its well-merited place by the side of *The Princess* and *In Memoriam*.

- 11.—*Notes of a Clerical Furlough, spent chiefly in the Holy Land. With a Sketch of the Voyage out in the Yacht "St. Ursula."* By ROBERT BUCHANAN, D. D. London: Blackie and Son. 1859. 12mo. pp. 445.

MR. BUCHANAN'S Preface, pleading the imperfections of a hasty tour and a limited study, rather disarms criticism. If we say of his book that it adds nothing to our knowledge of the Sacred Land, we say not much more than he has himself said of it. The interest of the subject and the easy flow of the style barely save it from the reproach of dulness. The most readable portion is that introductory chapter which follows the yacht *St. Ursula* in her perilous and varied voyage from Scotland to Syria. In this narrative there are some pleasant pictures and some novelties of detail, especially in the description of Gibraltar. But in the Palestinian portion there are only repetitions of a tale a hundred times told, with the customary wearisome addition of the Biblical references and historical notices. The track of Mr. Buchanan's travel there was over the beaten path, and over

only part of that. He did not go to Hebron, Gaza, or the Land of the Philistines, to Cæsarea, Carmel, Tyre, or Sidon, and his walks about Jerusalem were few and short. Half the objects of interest in the Holy City are left without mention, as they seem to have been unvisited.

Usually Mr. Buchanan adopts the topography of Robinson and the standard authorities. When he differs from this, he seems to us to be wrong, and he certainly gives no good reasons for his opinion. His view of the course of the Tyropœon is hastily assumed, and his theory about the "Tombs of the Kings" is unsatisfactory. The conjecture that Hermon, rather than Tabor, was the scene of the transfiguration, does not the more commend itself to our judgment that this new traveller has again brought it forward. Mr. Buchanan's objections to the traditional site of Gethsemane have less to recommend them than his objections to the Church of the Sepulchre as the site of Calvary, and the mosque on Mount Olivet as the place of the Ascension; though even here his conclusions are vitiated by loose reasoning and evident carelessness, as, for instance, on p. 245, where he writes "east" instead of "west," so overthrowing his argument. His derivation of the Arabic name "Urtâs" from the Latin "Hortus," because it is a *garden*, is simply ludicrous; and we take leave confidently to question his statement, that on the direct road from Bireh to Yebrûd a distinct and complete view of Bethel can be found. To see through the two miles of intervening mountains would require microscopes of stronger power than those suggested by Mr. Weller, Jr. in his celebrated testimony. It is a charming surprise, too, to learn that the Casa Nuova of the convent at Nazareth is "clean." A new labor of Hercules must have been performed there, to warrant such an epithet. On the Lake of Galilee Mr. Buchanan had an original boat-adventure, which enabled him to appreciate the miraculous narratives of the storm and the walking on the waves.

The worst literary blunder in the volume which we have noted is the frequent use of the word "lie" for "lay." He talks about the "*lie* of the land," and about a ship "lying her course."

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- 12.—*Life and Liberty in America; or, Sketches of a Tour in the United States and Canada, in 1857-58.* By CHARLES MACKAY, LL. D., F. S. A. With ten Illustrations. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1859. 12mo. pp. 413.

CHARLES MACKAY has not, in his sketches of American travel, like so many of his countrymen who have been lionized and feasted, answered with abuse and ridicule the civilities which he received. He has